1:Sanders Z-5)4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

If he is thinking of buying land, he is apt to follow his own inclinations. The wife's own little private purse consists of money she gets from chickens and milk. She uses this money to meet "gaps in her budget."

Secondly, my informant pointed out, the wife is very influential with her husband when he is selecting a mate for the children. The father must give the official approval and the village looks to him, but the mother is the one who influences him. Rarely will the mother betray a naughty child to the man of the house, for she thinks the man might beat him too hard. She might refer discipline to the father if the child is fourteen or over or if he gets out of hand. In other words, children are threatened with the father. If the mother is the pillar of the house and the father considered weak, then the children protect the mother. If the mother is "no good," then everything is referred to and channeled to the father. In fact, a wife is called "no good" or "an animal" if she does not darn properly, sew all the clothes of the family, be economical with food, have meals ready when the others return from the field, or keep the house tidy.

Two home economists who had worked extensively in the villages of Northern and Central Greece reaffirmed that "the man is really the boss, not just in appearance but in practice": "When we want the girls to come to take lessons in home economics the girls say, 'My father won't let me.' But woman is the unknown heroine. Besides carrying all of the load she is also involved in major decisions. If the man tells his wife to go to the field to work and she refuses, they may quarrel, but if she has a reason he won't insist. Eggs and poultry are her responsibility and she can have her own money to get what she wants — such as shoes. In the everyday life of the children, the woman has the upper hand, but in decisions such as sending a son to the university the man will decide."

These two home economists made the further observation that the "married couple will quarrel if the man drinks too much, but the woman is inclined to keep her problems to herself and will not go home to her parents if she feels imposed upon. In general, romance in the Western sense does not exist, but there is a feeling of attachment and understanding. A good analogy is that between a senior and junior partner in some major undertaking."

One villager from Central Greece, a secretary of his local community council, summed up the status of woman by saying, "in the home the woman has the veto power."

There are several interpretations that might be placed on the seeming dominance of the man in Greek society. I could always arouse spirited discussion in any coffeehouse when I suggested that women were really the dominant force, that they had learned that their security lay in letting the men feel very important while the women went through the motions of showing respect to them. Actually, so this argument runs, women have made

1:Sanders Z-5)4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

reveal only some of the traits of the husband-wife relationship in rural Greece. It is equally important to see how this partnership operates day by day, season by season, year by year, for it is in the sharing of a common life, with its hardships and flashing joys, that this companionship based on mutual respect is fashioned. Great is the wife's satisfaction if her husband is considered a good provider. If he is, people say: "Tes dinei tou pouliou to gala" (He brings the bird's milk to her), or "Kai tou pouliou to gala echei" (She even has the milk of the bird). Such phrases go back to the practice of serving eggs beaten in milk to the sick, thereby showing that good care is being taken.

The wife, in addition to watching her own behavior toward her husband, is also responsible for seeing that the children are respectful. The lessons learned in the younger years tends to persist through adolescence into adulthood. Once while sitting at a meal in a Greek home I noticed the young man leave the table. Curious about his exit, I asked: "Where is Petros going?" The father, with a pleased look on his face, said: "He is going out to smoke a cigarette. He does not smoke in front of me." And wherever I went I asked young men singly or in groups whether or not they smoked in the presence of their fathers and found only a small fraction that broke this taboo. To be sure, in some villages and in some homes the young man no longer takes a trek outside if he wants a smoke, but he knows he is going against an old established custom. In one group of nineteen young men, for instance, only three said they would smoke in front of their fathers; in another group of twenty-eight, again only three said they would do so.

The son also shows respect for his father by not going to the same coffeehouse where his father is or is apt to go, but there are regional variations. In villages of the Pelion (near Volos, Thessaly) a man may take his son or even his wife to the coffeehouse, but in the words of the commandant of gendarmerie there "they may act this way near Volos but in my village in Boeotia it would be a great shame if the father and his son were in the same coffeehouse, and no woman would think of entering." As a general rule, even fewer of the young men would accompany their fathers to a coffeehouse than would smoke in their presence. In some of the smaller villages the people say that they do not have enough cafés and so the possibility of the two generations staying apart is not very great.

But on every hand there are signs that the formal etiquette governing respect is breaking down. One well-informed official near Salonica said, "The basic Greek tradition of showing respect for elders is weakening. Now you see boys teaching their fathers how to play backgammon and cards. In the United States you would think this fine but over here our system is patriarchal, and the young American starts life outside the home at an earlier age." A folklorist pointed out that in the past the reverence for Greek customs was looked on as necessary for national survival, especially under the Turks and when people were isolated.

1:Sanders Z-5.A (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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VIII

Courtship and Marriage

177 834 581 593 A young woman, who had grown up in the traditionally sheltered way in a Greek village, after spending several months in an American university, made these comments:

The father here in America is like a brother instead of a father.

I like the way the American mother reasons with the children and doesn't order them around.

In Greece you never tell anybody about your boy friend — not even your parents. Over here people talk about private matters. If you should do so in Greece, your parents would throw you out of the house.

In Greece we marry for love; in America you love without marrying.

831 834 593 [581] [577] One may question the last statement as far as the Greek villager's marrying for love is concerned; but there is no question about the Greeks' stress upon keeping the boys and girls apart until they are married. The honor, or chastity, of the bride is a value of great importance, and any breach of the sex mores may have dire social consequences. To be sure, there are violations of this taboo and in many areas a gradual erosion of the rigid enforcement, but in rural Greece one can count upon parents and brothers actively to try to safeguard a young woman's honor. This is even institutionalized in what is called *e time tou adelphou* (the honor of the brother),

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Syros (island): I will not marry if my parents object.

Central Peloponnesos: In my village the young people pick their own mates. Twenty years ago the parents picked the mates but we still have to get parental consent as a matter of courtesy. We have no matchmaker in our village. You find these near the cities where people make money in such matters.

Macedonia: I would marry whom I picked out for I am going to have to live with her. I don't see why my parents will object, for I am going to pick out someone who is respectable. [Second speaker:] I have loved a girl from an early age and, if my father objects, I will marry her anyway since I am the one who has to live with my wife and my father can live with his old woman. "But what if your father disinherits you?" I will marry and do without his fields.

Northern Peloponnesos: If I see a girl whom I want to marry I will go directly to the girl's parents. If the girl accepts me, then my parents will go to arrange for the marriage. "What do you say when you talk to her parents?" I have seen your daughter and would like her for a wife. Could you find out if she likes me and if so would you accept me? By doing it this way, the rest of the village does not know that a boy has been turned down. But boys are always accepted unless they have done something very bad.

These comments from the young men themselves illustrate that one could divide the villages of Greece, and the families within the villages, according to the way mate selection is carried out. First, there are still villages where the young people have almost nothing to say about whom they are to marry and leave the matter up to the parents entirely. For example, in another group interview of nineteen young men, five said that they would expect their fathers to select their wives. One young man said, "I'll follow my father's selection since no father would want bad for his son." Villages where such views predominate are becoming fewer all of the time and tend to be found where the economy is based upon livestock production, including the nomadic shepherd tribes. Second, there are villages where parental consent is essential but where the young men are expected to take the initiative, suggest to their parents the names of the prospective bride, and let them carry on the negotiations from there. Almost nowhere does the girl have the right of initiative, although in some villages she would not be forced to marry anyone to whom she had strong objection, unless there were overriding family or economic considerations. Third, there are villages where the young people make the decision almost entirely on their own but expect their parents to agree, nevertheless being ready to strike out on their own should the parents prove "unreasonable" and try to prevent the marriage.

The peasants look at the changing marriage scene in terms of "marriage for love" and "arranged marriages." What they really mean by the first term is active participation of the young people in mate selection, but they

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

584 581 178 [831] do not mean that the young people subscribe to the romance of the Hollywood movies where love is glorified as an end unto itself. By "arranged marriages" is meant the lack of initiative on the part of the young and the willingness on the part of the boy or girl to give up a preferred mate if the parents strongly object.

It is safe to say that the pendulum is swinging from the arranged to the marriage for love. But in most Greek villages the parents still play an active role in negotiating with each other on behalf of their children and in trying to forestall what they would consider an unfortunate selection. Where parents and children disagree in such cases the situation becomes known to [626] the village at large, and public opinion sometimes supports the young people. The father may be told at the coffeehouse, "Why don't you let your daughter marry Theodore? He is not such a bad boy after all." And the neighboring women take the mother to task, reminding her that her husband was not such a wonderful catch when they first married but that he had worked hard, had done well, and had earned everybody's respect.

The Dowry

581 583 What are the criteria of a fortunate and an unfortunate selection? Young people were very explicit about this, although by no means unanimous in their answers. Looming large throughout most of Greece is the dowry, or economic resources which the girl brings to the new union.[1] One father from a village near Thebes summarized the situation as follows: "If you have gold sovereigns, you marry off your daughter; if not, you don't." In the [162] villages the surplus of girls, existing since World War I, has been increasing. This came to light when we asked where the men sought their mates — in the home village or elsewhere. Often the reply would be: "Wherever the men can get the best *proika* [dowry]." But there were those who disagreed with this emphasis on money: "If you marry just for money, all day long the wife will hold the purse strings and then where will you be?" In the case of the girl, honor or chastity ranks high as does good health, without which the wife cannot be a good worker. Beauty and good looks are also most welcome, although now and then one would say that "beauty is not too important if the girl has a good heart." As for the man, wealth, education, and position make him a proper risk as a husband if he has a good reputation as well.

These traits which prospective mates should possess have much meaning because in Greece marriage unites two families, and dowry arrangements are contracts between families and not just between two individuals. One keen observer of village life pointed out that "in a village one always hears people speak of families as 'good family' or 'not a good family.'" The standard of *good* is largely in terms of money. The individual from a good family has a big head start in life in a country where financial resources are

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

so limited. In the village of Laina, near Thessalonike, people said of a girl: "Every boy in the village wants to marry her; she is from a good family and has five hundred golden sovereigns as a dowry."

Another informant, describing the village from which she came, also cited the importance of family background. In her village "the boy wants a mate who will be a good tidy housewife, attractive, strong enough for field work; money comes in but is last. The family background is very important. If there are two girls, equally attractive, and one brings a bigger dowry and the other comes from a better family, the boy will choose the latter. The girl, on the other hand, wants a fast worker and does not mind too much about his family's reputation or even his own if she thinks him kind and considerate enough not to make her go out and work; he shouldn't gamble or drink (too much); his looks don't matter, but he should be loyal and not more than five or six years older. If a woman marries a man younger than herself, there is a lot of gossip at first but it then quiets down. The girl knows about a man from hearsay."

There are undoubtedly regional differences in the emphases placed upon the traits most sought after in one's prospective mate, as was borne out when I asked sixteen soldiers stationed near the Albanian border what they would rank first in choosing a wife. Those from around Kavalla and in other parts of Northern Greece placed honor first, being a good housekeeper second, and beauty third. Those from the Peloponnesos and the island of Chios stated beauty, honor, and money in that order, while a man from Thessaly said that in his village the dowry or money would be first. A Cretan listed beauty at the top. But the danger of an easy generalization from such comments as these should be avoided, even though they do correspond fairly well to those made by well-informed Greek home economists for two of the areas mentioned above: "Around Kavalla, for instance, if a girl's father offers a big dowry, she will first want someone from outside the village and does not care too much about his looks. He doesn't have to be an Apollo. If she is considering someone from her own village she asks about his family, his looks, and his reputation.[8] The village man pays more attention to looks and wants to be sure that his wife will be a good worker. In the bigger towns he is more concerned with the dowry. Around Larissa (Thessaly) questions of love are secondary, for the man there is more interested in the dowry. If the girl has a 'fortune,' or large dowry, she is apt to choose someone from the town and may expect the husband to come and live in her village. But it is not uncommon for a man and wife to sell her land to build a house in the city."

Some of these regional differences in emphasis take on new light when one sees that the dowry consists of different property in various parts of Greece.

Usually, the eldest sister is supposed to marry first, followed by the next

1:Sanders Z-514 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

583 articles of clothing, such as undergarments, which the rude looms cannot suitably fashion. Women have been urged since early childhood to get up at break of day and work on these trousseaus for themselves or for their daughters long before it was time to go out to the fields.

Most families have a common fund from which expenditures are to be made for dowry items. From time to time, husbands and wives quarrel over the use of further funds for the dowry, since the man will claim that the daughter already has enough household items and linens or sufficient sovereigns, but the wife will not agree. As the girl approaches marriageable age, most people in the village have a shrewd way of sizing up just what dowry she will bring, and the local girls are even roughly ranked along this line. Nevertheless, in discussing the desirability of some young woman, people are quick to mention her family background, what a good worker she is, and other personal qualities which may favor her. A girl will start accumulating her dowry as a serious pursuit from her tenth year on, but no final decision will be made as to the exact amount of land or money she will bring to her husband until some young man seeks her out, or the family begins in earnest to try to marry her off. Family fortunes can vary too much to permit a decision of this sort very far in advance. At times, the exact amount is the subject of bargaining, for the young man may ask for whatever sum he wants and the young woman's parents will tell what they can give. If a mutually satisfactory sum is reached, then the engagement is announced.

In those villages where there are active contacts with some city, the family may find it necessary to send a daughter there to help earn her dowry (for instance, if there are three daughters in a family). As early as eight years of age, she may be sent to some relatives and gradually accumulate a sufficient sum from her meager wages. Some parents may borrow money for the dowry from some richer relative without interest, but seldom from outsiders. If necessary, too, they may sell some land to get the required amount. Now and then a well-to-do man may arrange to marry a girl without demanding a dowry and this gives the village something to talk about for quite a while. Or some young men were encountered, particularly in the Peloponnesos, who fall in love with a girl and then try to find out a way to get a house built even though the girl has no dowry. Such variations illustrate that, even in a society with patriarchal overtones, one finds in rural Greece the belief that "love will find a way," whether it means persuading recalcitrant parents to give their permission or accumulating the wherewithal to buy a house so one can marry. And although there are mercenary overtones to any dowry agreement, it is the general rule that parents are trying to look out for their daughter's welfare to the best of their ability, that they are anticipating the in-law relationships — very important in Greece — with the parents and relatives of their daughter's husband.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

Marriage

Even before an engagement is agreed upon, relatives check the kinship of the boy and girl to be sure that they are not too closely related to marry. In Mesolongi, for instance, a few years ago those related up to the fourth degree could not marry, but this is beginning to break down somewhat. Around Arta second cousins may marry, but in many parts of Macedonia there are restrictions up to third cousins. Generally throughout Greece, young people with the same godparent are considered "spiritual brethren" and cannot marry. It does not take long for some knowledgeable relative to review the kinship lines and decide whether the engagement would violate local customs, which are as important as the official church position on this matter.

Panos D. Bardis, in writing on the main features of the Greek family during the twentieth century, summarizes the teachings of the Greek Orthodox Church regarding the goals of marriage as follows: 1. increase of the human race; 2. promotion of mutual helpfulness among the members of the family; 3. restraint of passions; 4. Christian training of the young. He points out that some of these goals have been only partially achieved because of the patriarchal and authoritarian nature of the Greek family, but they remain those set forth by the church. Bardis also makes a useful summary of the essential elements of the engagement and wedding ceremonies:

1. Rings: the man's ring is of gold and symbolizes the sun, whereas the woman's ring is of silver and symbolizes the moon.
2. Crowns: these denote the marital bond and the glory of the sacrament. In Greece, these crowns are made of flowers, or evergreen, while the Russian Orthodox Church in earlier days preferred replicas of the Royal Crown.
3. Wine: this is offered to the couple in remembrance of the marriage in Cana, and symbolizes their mutual sharing of unhappiness in life.
4. Public confession of consent by both parties.
5. Blessing of the priest, which is considered very essential and is repeatedly stressed in the writings of the early church fathers.[9]

If one bears these five points in mind, the description of a peasant wedding takes on more meaning and makes greater sense to one not brought up in the Orthodox faith. Furthermore, it is apparent that the church ceremony itself is only one part of the unfolding drama in which the whole village takes a keen interest. Here, in free translation, is a day-by-day account of what happened in the village of Artotina in Aetolia, just prior to the outbreak of World War II.[10]

When the bride is ready with her dowry and the amount of money has been given to the groom's family, the date of the marriage is fixed, always on a Sunday unless one of the two people has been married before, in which case the

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1963 EH1 Greece EH1
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share of the land at the time of their marriage, the shares remaining for the sons will be too small to enable them to support their future wives and children, the family recognizes the problem and tries to make some adjustment that will prevent the threatened poverty. The villagers are well aware of the dangers of land fragmentation under a system of equal inheritance. The average land holding in Vasilika is already only one-third to one-fourth of what it was at the time the village was settled. Thanks to the introduction of irrigation and improvements in agricultural techniques (see Chapters 2 and 3), both the bulk of yields and the cash value of the crops in the area have increased to the point at which the farmers maintain a higher standard of living on the smaller holdings than their grandfathers did on the more extensive ones. But the process has its limits, and the future possibility of economically useless small holdings is a real hazard for Vasilika's families.

One kind of solution to its problem is for a family to try to train or educate its "surplus" sons for a nonfarming occupation; if possible, one that will send them to the towns and cities as white-collar workers or as professional men. This effort, however, is more than merely a solution to a recognized problem. Status as an urbanite has very high value for the villagers in its own right. As the previous chapter has shown, the families of Vasilika try to import urban ways into the village; their efforts to send their own sons and daughters directly into the towns and cities may now be discussed. For quite apart from the necessities of their situation, the people of Vasilika act as if they assumed that life in towns and cities is superior to life in a small village. This judgment is not based on a belief that there is necessarily greater economic well-being in the towns. On the contrary, the villagers believe it is more difficult to achieve a respectable standard in the larger centers and, indeed, that the plight of the poor is worse in the town than in the village. They say it is harder to have little when one is tempted by so much. But the villagers respect an educated man; education enables a person to pursue occupations which the villagers believe have greater prestige than farming, and the preponderance of these occupations are practiced in towns. Not only white-collar workers but also journalists, lawyers, doctors, writers, gymnasium and university professors congregate in the provincial towns and in Athens (cf. Antonakaki 1955:93). Even if a young man from Vasilika is not fortunate enough to work in one of these favored occupations—even if he is a tailor or a barber or an artisan of another type, or a small merchant—he is believed to acquire some aura of prestige simply by living in the more populous center.

The young girls of Vasilika want to marry into the towns because they are well aware of the greater physical ease and comfort available there and contrast these conditions favorably with the arduous and endless labor they are accustomed to in the village.

Still another incentive for gaining the status of a town dweller is the belief, in Vasilika, that life in town is more full of adventure and less monotonous than life in the village. Besides, the towns and Athens have crowds, and *polis cosmos* (many people) are enjoyed by the villagers for their own sake. A *paniyiri* or Easter is considered successful in proportion to the number of people

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) #3 EH1 Greece EH1
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584 from the village or from the community of the prospective spouse, rather than a professional. On the groom's side, the father participates in the negotiations, but the prospective groom himself is present and active in the proceedings. His decision as to the minimum value of the dowry and the form in which he will accept it is the crucial one.

The dowry negotiations and the final marriage contract can be usefully discussed, therefore, as analogous to a commercial transaction in which each side tries to get the most value at the least cost. For the bride's father, the material 583 costs include the land and cash he must give as part of his daughter's dowry. 428 She is, of course, legally and customarily entitled to her share of the patrimony, 423 but except for the cash, the determination of just how much is her share is not easy to arrive at. A farmer, as we have seen, holds land in scattered parcels of different quality; some of the parcels are in the immediate vicinity of Vasilika, no more than an hour's walk away from the village; others may have been part of his wife's dowry and may, therefore, be near her village; his house has value, but since his daughter will not live with him, he cannot give her part of it. The problem is solved in Vasilika by making a rough estimate of the money value of the parents' property in terms of gold sovereigns (*lires*) and then determining how many *lires* a girl is entitled to. Since the end of the Greek Civil War in [436] 1949, the drachma has been stabilized, and the villagers as well as the rest of [454] the Greek population are gaining confidence in the currency. However, the belief that gold sovereigns, worth approximately $10 each in 1961, are the only trustworthy form of cash is still common in Greece, as is the hoarding of the sovereigns and the requirement that bills be paid in them. The villagers evaluate [435] property in terms of *lires* and always speak of a dowry as one of so many *lires*, regardless of whether the property transferred is cash or land or both.

593 Besides the property costs of the dowry, a farmer loses the labor of his 152 daughter both on the farm and in the household. Finally, there is an emotional cost to the parents, particularly to the mother, at the marriage of a daughter. A mother loses the companionship of a friend, a confidante, and a working partner [582] in the house and the fields. Among the more prosperous farmers, girls marry in their middle or late twenties. As a result mothers frequently have had many years of cooperation with grown daughters. The wrench at parting is seriously felt. Mothers in Vasilika openly lament the loss of their daughters and speak frequently of how much they miss their absent girls.

581 When a marriage is contemplated between families of equal wealth and 584 social position, for example, when the daughter of a farmer is being married to a man who expects to stay on his father's farm, and when his share of the farm has approximately the same value as what the girl brings in as a dowry, the negotiations are relatively straightforward. Each side can then limit itself to checking on the claims the other is making and to surveying the total situation. Is the yield of the land the girl is bringing what her father says it is? Will the son-in-law be entitled to the share of the land he claims he will have? Does the [593] boy have so many sisters that his father may die before they have been married off leaving the boy with the responsibility of dowering them? Is the father-in-law's house well enough equipped so that the girl will be able to live at approxi-

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
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mately the standard she had at home? How many brothers does the groom have who are also going to be farmers and who will, therefore, have to share the house itself, or for whom some housing provision must eventually be made? Because personal qualities of the prospective groom will influence the success with which he manages his own and his dower properties, a father asks whether the groom has a reputation for industriousness. Is there any danger that the groom will "eat" the dowry properties, as the villagers phrase a propensity for using capital resources for current needs or for luxuries? Are the groom's father and brothers sober men who will conserve property and work to get the best income from it?

In short, the bride's father wants to assure, insofar as he is able, the future well-being of his daughter and of her children. He also wants the emotional satisfaction of having been successful at making a good arrangement for her. One village father pointed to a field we were passing and explained that he had given it to his daughter as part of her *prika* (dowry), so that all the cotton from the field was for his grandson. He then went on to say that he had married his daughter well and said of his three-year-old grandson, "Who knows, one day he might become a lawyer or a doctor. He has a brain, the little one." The implication was that he, the farmer, had contributed to whatever the final destiny of his grandson might be by having supplied such good fields for his daughter's dowry.

A girl's parents also want assurance that she will live in a congenial household. They hope that the new mother-in-law and the groom's sisters will accept the girl with good grace and that she will be decently treated. A man's wife and daughter will always remind him of the resources the family has already expended on the trousseau and the skill with which they were woven. From the women's point of view, these are important parts of the cost, and they want a girl to go to a family which will appreciate both the quantity and the fine workmanship of the *rukha*. Some friction between a girl and her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law is accepted in Vasilika as part of the condition of marriage to a farmer. The severity of friction is mitigated, however, by the independent dignity a girl acquires by having brought her husband a dowry and by the pride her husband's family takes in their own skill at having helped arrange a good marriage for their son.

The groom's interest, on the other hand, is to supplement his patrimony with as much land and cash as he can get from his wife's dowry. After their marriage, the husband and wife will have jurisdiction over her dowry properties. Unless the marriage contract states otherwise, and it rarely does in marriages between a farmer and a village girl, the husband has the right to the management and control of movable and personal property that he received with his wife and the management of the real estate given as part of the dowry. The alienation of movable dower property requires only the informal consent of his wife, while the alienation of real estate requires a formal notarized consent statement from his wife and the permission of the court (Civil Code Sections 1416 and 1417). (The groom's father, therefore, is interested only from the standpoint of the general welfare of his son. He himself will have no direct control over his daughter-in-law's land or money.)

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581 583 over his daughter-in-law's land or money.) From the groom's point of view, an industrious young girl also has high value, and if she is healthy, good-looking, modest, virtuous, and amiable as well, she is of still additional worth. Therefore, an ugly older girl with a bad reputation would have to bring a large dowry to compensate for her personal deficiencies: Conversely, an attractive, healthy, virtuous young girl might be able to marry a slightly wealthier man than her dowry would normally be expected to command. [533] Greek folk songs often lament the story of a young girl who attracted a wealthy older suitor to whom her family married her because he was willing to take a smaller dowry. The songs, in this instance, reflect actual situations known on the Boeotian countryside, although they do not occur with any great frequency.

Negotiations, Courtship, and Marriage

584 For the families involved, the marriage negotiations have the quality of participation in a kind of ritualized contest. A young man may have been recommended to a girl's father; the father sends an intermediary with information as to how much dowry he is willing to give; the intermediary then goes off to the groom and his father, to whom he exaggerates the size of the dowry and the qualities of the girl. The villagers assume he will also exaggerate the qualities of the groom to the girl's family. The enjoyment of the game lies in each group's efforts indirectly to get accurate information about the other side. This is done by making inquiries among one's own relatives living in the prospective spouse's village and by asking questions of others who know the family. Secrecy about the very existence of the negotiations is helpful at this point, because the villagers do not believe they can get accurate information if anyone knows they have a direct interest in the matter. Many times a sister in another village will act as informal intermediary for her brother and try to find out how much of a dowry some of the better young men are asking for. Tentative questions of this sort may be asked for years before a serious negotiation is finally fully launched. These tentative steps may be terminated at any time without loss of honor on either side if the young man informs the intermediary that the dowry is not quite enough, or if the girl's father uses the excuse that his daughter is not yet ready to marry because she has not accumulated sufficient *rukha*. [583] In fact, the grooms are not interested in the *rukha*. As one villager phrased it, "It is land and money they burn for around here."

In Vasilika, both in the previous generations and at present, it has been possible for a young man and woman never to have seen each other until the first formal occasion for meeting. However, a young man may have seen an attractive girl at a *paniyiri* or other festival, and may have asked his father to investigate her situation. [834] But, since unmarried village boys and girls do not talk to each other in public unless they are related, the chances are that he has never talked to her. A young girl may, in her turn, know a great deal about the young men in the surrounding villages and may also have had opportunities to see them at the local festivities, but may never have talked to any of them. In any case, it

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is village custom for both boy and girl to act as if they know nothing about the discussions going on. At the first formal meeting, both the boy and girl have the right to express any personal antipathy they may have for the prospective spouse. But if the marriage is otherwise an advantageous one, they are likely to be persuaded to overcome any but the most extreme feelings of repugnance. The villagers are not callous about the matter of personal compatibility between spouses; they assume, however, that if the marriage conditions are right, a harmonious relationship will develop, and if it does not, the successful economic or prestige conditions of the marriage will help to allay sufferings arising from the lack of personal contentment.

Once the major provisions of the marriage contract are agreed upon, the machinery for the formal engagement gets under way. This involves, first, a visit by the groom, his father, and several of his other relatives, but not his mother, to the home of the bride. Here the men again check on the agreements, the father of the groom pins a single *lira* on the bride, the bride's mother pins a *lira* on the groom; there is food and drink, and the bride gives gifts of small items such as socks, stockings, pillow cases, or towels to the groom and his entire group. For the women, this process is important; what is given on the one hand, and what is received on the other, is discussed by the women on both sides with great zest and frequent criticism. If this affair raises no issues which lead to the dissolution of the agreements, about ten days later, the bride's father invites his own relatives and those of the groom from wherever they are in Greece to a large engagement party which lasts from a Saturday night through to Sunday. The bride's neighbors and the groom's friends also come.

From the time of the ceremonial exchange of the *lires*, the young couple are considered formally engaged. They are now free not only to see each other but to travel anywhere together, and the groom may even come and stay at the girl's home for some time. In the villagers' view, if the young couple have proper respect for both sets of parents they will refrain from sex relations during this period. Certainly if the girl becomes pregnant before the wedding there is disapproval not only because of the moral stigma, but also because it requires an immediate wedding at a time when the accumulation of the agreed-upon dowry property may not yet have been completed. A premature ceremony is therefore not advantageous to the groom. Engagements lasting a year or more are frequent, and the villagers speak of unfortunate situations in which this status has been protracted for as long as ten years.

Weddings in Vasilika in recent years, the villagers say, have become less elaborate and less of a village event than they once were. As later sections will show, many of the village girls marry men in the towns, and this frequently results in having the wedding in the town church rather than in Vasilika. Moreover, the villagers say, this system obviates the necessity of inviting large numbers of villagers to the wedding feast and so cuts down on the cost to the bride's father.

At weddings held in the village between children of farmers, however, much of the tradition is maintained. For example, the groom's male relatives come to the house of the bride on the Saturday afternoon before the Sunday

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or in a regular pattern of circulation through several generations among particular sets of such groups. The control of property establishes social links between a man and his wife's relatives not only in the ways we have mentioned, but because his wife's parents and brothers and sisters have a legal and customary right to be consulted before the final alienation of dower property (Section 1418). These links last only one generation, however, so that in each generation a new network of relations between elementary families in the neighborhood develops, clustering around the management of dower properties. These matters are important because they reveal some of the economic and social structure of Vasilika and its neighborhood that is congruent with the type of relationships people, both kin and non-kin, have with each other (see Chapter 5).

One other situation occurs frequently enough in Vasilika to be worth mentioning. When a farmer has no sons to inherit his land and his house, but has a daughter, the father may acquire a man's assistance on the farm by importing a son-in-law. Such a man is called a *soghambros* in Vasilika; he is a husband who moves into his wife's household instead of vice-versa. The importation of a *soghambros* is also a solution to the problem of a young widow who has no grown sons to run the farm left by her husband and arranges a second marriage for herself with a man who is willing to work her first husband's holdings and her original dower lands. Since a *soghambros* is always a manager of, and the laborer on, property belonging to others and is expected to bring no property of his own with him, there is a slight social stigma attached to the status of Vasilika. The villagers say also that a *soghambros* is not "master in his own house." Certainly, the lot of a man who is not a master in his own house and comes as a stranger to a village where most of the other men have known each other all their lives is not a happy one. But a *soghambros* is not really dishonored by his position; the villagers, in this situation, as in so many others, recognize the practical necessities which brought about the arrangement and do not strongly condemn a man for making the best of his difficulties.

The dowry in Vasilika enters into the life of the villagers in other ways besides inheritance at marriage. It has long served as a means of upward social mobility for girls. Since, as we have seen, the marriage of a daughter is among the most important obligations of parents, the dowry comes into the consciousness of the villagers more often as a property requirement for marrying off their daughters than as a means of transmitting inheritance. When, in addition, the high value placed on upward social mobility is translated into an effort to find urban sons-in-law for one's daughters, the dowry emerges as a mechanism for increasing the social prestige of the family. Farmers are willing to give larger dowries in exchange for the great satisfaction they derive from having town sons-in-law. In Vasilika, the education of some sons has released land to add to the girls' dowries. Improved agricultural income has also enabled the farmers to give larger dowries. In the decade ending in 1959, every marriage of a Vasilika daughter whose father was in the upper half of the village's income range had been one with a man of respectable occupation who lived in a provincial town or in Athens. The husbands are tailors, small retail store-owners, or civil service workers. One young man is a photographer, another is a gymnasium

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professor who has become the principal of his gymnasium. In 1961, however, the son of a rather prosperous village farmer became attracted to a daughter of another Vasilika farmer with good land holdings. The young man asked his father to arrange the marriage for him, and, since all the conditions were entirely suitable, the young couple were engaged.

The trend in favor of town husbands prevails, however, among most of those who can afford it. Once a few girls had married urban men, the rivalry between village families led to greater efforts to secure town husbands for the others. Consequently, there has been an inflation in dowries which is alarming the villagers themselves. In the early 1950's, a *prika* worth $3,000 was enough for a town husband of no special prestige; by the late 1950's, the same kind of man was asking for one worth $4,500.

The inflation has had several consequences. Often the value of the dowry can no longer be limited to the share of the inheritance to which a girl is entitled. Farming sons are willing to give up some portion of their shares so that their sisters can "live well," as they put it. The brothers gain also from the added prestige and influence of the family. These in turn may make it possible for them to find a girl with a larger dowry than their property qualifications might warrant. A farmer so situated may make higher demands on the ground that his and his wife's children will have an urban aunt and uncle. The town sister might provide board for her nephews and nieces (girls are increasingly being sent to gymnasium) while they are in school and can also be expected to help them find jobs.

Another consequence of the dowry inflation is the increasingly late age of marriage for the village girls and the town men. It takes farmers longer to accumulate the larger amounts of cash for the dowry, and the prospective grooms longer to attain a position or income at least partially commensurate. Vasilika's girls who marry town men are usually between twenty-five and thirty. Those whose fathers have few land holdings, and consequently can offer only small dowries, have been marrying farmers from other villages or within Vasilika itself and have been in their early twenties at the time of the engagement.

Now let us consider the disposition of the dowry which goes with a girl marrying a town husband. First, if he accepts land as part of the dowry, he will of necessity have it worked by his wife's male relatives. In time, however, often by the end of the first decade of the marriage, the son-in-law may wish to expand his shop, or may wish to start building a house for himself or for his daughter's dowry, or may hear of a good investment opportunity. He will want money for these purposes, and so he begins, with his wife's consent and after consultation with her father, to arrange for the sale of dowry lands. Since the 1950's, prospective town grooms have been less willing to take land which they know they will eventually want to sell, and have been asking for cash or for a house in town. Anticipating this situation, several of Vasilika's farmers who have small daughters have begun to use their savings and even to sell a little land in order to build houses in Athens or in a provincial town so that by the time their daughters are ready to marry, the houses will provide the main portion of the dowry.

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of the dowry. Rents are high and earnings relatively low in cities so that houses are a good investment. However, since building materials must be bought, and contractors paid, in cash, the houses may take many years to build. The young couple may then move into the habitable shell, and the rest of the dwelling will be completed out of the farmer's then current income. This kind of dowry-on-the-installment-plan becomes part of the marriage contract. It is often a source not only of continuing long-term discussions between a farmer and his town son-in-law, but also a source of quarrels—what in Greece are called *fasaries*.

The rate of movement of farmers' daughters into the towns and cities has been accelerating in the last decade, but marriages to urban husbands are not a new phenomenon. Between 1930 and 1950, at least five of Vasilika's women married "into Athens."

This type of marriage, like those discussed above in which both bride and groom are members of farm families, accelerates land sales and exchanges. The network of association which develops between Vasilika's residents and their relatives in Athens and the towns, is, however, perhaps the most important consequence of the urban marriages of village women (Friedl 1959a). In addition to the economic reasons for continuing relationships, there are several customary patterns which increase the frequency of contacts between the two groups. Lonely village mothers are grateful for visits from their married daughters and their grandchildren, and the midsummer season not uncommonly finds city women with their children back in the village visiting their parents, often for as long as a month or two. A return to one's village for Easter, sometimes for most of the Holy Week as well, is a well-known pattern in Greece. *Paniyiri* in one's *patridha* (home village) is another occasion for visiting.

Journeys in the opposite direction also occur with some frequency. Village men and women, when ill, may enter hospitals in a town in which they have sons or daughters, or brothers or sisters. Village men visit their town brothers and bring their children; occasionally a child spends a summer with his town aunt or uncle. Visits to the village or to the town usually last several days. They are made possible by still another congruent pattern of Greek culture. Neither the villagers nor their town relatives seem to have any strong need for personal privacy. Visiting relatives are bedded down on pallets when there are not enough regular beds, and it is not considered either indecent or especially uncomfortable for one or even two families to sleep in the same room. It is through this intervisiting process that so many urban traits of culture are introduced to the villagers and, indeed, that some village patterns are conserved in urban areas.

An additional consequence of the town marriages of village girls is that rural wealth derived from land flows into the cities. This wealth is an addition to what the productivity of land normally contributes to urban centers in the form of food, taxes, and the export of rural produce. A portion of the farmer's profits, through the dowry, is being used, it would seem, directly to support a part of the urban population. When the dowries are invested in housing or in small commercial enterprises, many low-salaried employees, civil service workers,

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aunt, uncle, niece, and nephew are directly translatable into the English words, except that the linguistic forms vary for males and females, and that, in fact, the villagers refer to distinctions between first and second cousins more frequently than Americans do.[4] Like ours, the system is characterized by the distinctness of elementary family terms, the separation of generations, and the equal consideration of both father's and mother's line of descent in the terms for all consanguineal (blood) relatives. So far the Greek terms are also entirely congruent with the actual functioning distinctiveness of the elementary family and the existing bilateral descent in the country. There is special interest for us, however, in the Greek terms for affinal relatives (that is, relatives by marriage) which, in some instances, differ from those in English and are, in turn, congruent with the particular significance of marriage in Greek social structure.

Petheros (masculine) and *pethera* (feminine) are equivalent to English father-in-law and mother-in-law, but there is an additional, reciprocal Greek term which two sets of in-laws use in referring to each other: *simpetheros* and *simpethera*. In English these must be rendered as "my son's or daughter's father- or mother-in-law." The Greek terms, then, group together the parents of a husband and wife with a term of reference roughly translatable as "co-in-laws." The Greek word for son-in-law, *ghambros*, is also used to mean groom, and that for daughter-in-law, *nifi*, is also used for bride. Moreover, all the members of a man's elementary family, not only his parents, but also his brothers and sisters, all refer to his wife as their *nifi*, and all the members of a woman's elementary family refer to her husband as their *ghambros*. The terms *nifi* and *ghambros*, then, are not equivalent to any English kin terms, but must be translated as "that man or woman who has married a member of my elementary family." At least two generations, that of parents and their children, use the same terms to refer to people normally in the younger generation. In other words, the generational distinctiveness characteristic of terms for blood relatives is replaced by the status designation for a person who has married into an elementary family. This disregard of generation is not reciprocated, however, by the spouses of one's children or by one's brothers and sisters. As we have seen, mother and father of one's spouse are called *petharos* and *pethera;* now we can add that brothers and sister of one's spouse are referred to as *kunyadhos* and *kunyadha*, that is brother- and sister-in-law.

The status category of marriage into a particular elementary family appears again, however, in the existence of distinct terms by which men who have married two sisters refer to each other, *badzanakidhes*, and by which women who have married two brothers refer to each other, *sinifadhes*. Men who have married sisters and women who have married brothers have to deal with the same sets of in-laws and this constitutes a common bond which is signalized by the terms just given. Another way of saying this is that those women who are referred to as *nifi* by the same actual kin, also have a name for each other, *sinifadha*, and those men who are referred to as *ghambros* by the same actual kin, also have a name for each other, *badzanakis*.

[4] See Andromedas (1957) for a complete list of modern Greek kinship terms.

601 There is a reciprocal term equivalent in meaning, but not at all as technical in its connotation as the English word "spouse," whereby husbands and wives refer to each other: *sizighos*. Apart from this, there are no Greek words with the specific and exclusive significance of English "husband" and "wife." For husband, *andras* (man) is used; for wife, *yineka* (woman) or *kira* (lady).

601 608 585 The remaining terms in the Greek system that are related to marriage are those which refer reciprocally to a couple's marriage sponsor and the latter's spouse: *kumbaros* and *kumbara*. Moreover, the terms are extended on both sides to refer to the parents, brothers and sisters, and children of the original sponsors and their spouses when they marry.

Marriage sponsors may, but need not be chosen (and in the majority of instances in Vasilika are not chosen) from among one's biological kin. The term [582] *kumbaros* is, however, properly considered part of the system of kinship terms because of a very weighty customary prohibition which the status of *kumbaros* imposes: the prohibition against marriage in the same degrees as those appropriate to blood relatives.

601 608 851 The same reciprocal terms, *kumbaros* and *kumbara*, with the same extensions to the kindred of each of the original parties and the same marriage prohibitions, are established between the parents of a child and his baptismal godparent (*nonos* or *nona*). Here again, parents may choose those with whom they wish to enter into this relationship, and individuals may or may not accept the request to sponsor a godchild (*vaftistikos* or *vaftistikya*).

602 608 557 [581] Vasilika's inhabitants make use of the possibilities of the *kumbari* system in such a way as to parallel their search for affinal kin (in-laws). Just as the people of Vasilika select marriage partners for themselves and their children with an eye to the augmentation of material resources and social prestige, so they try to find *kumbari* whose wealth and position will be a source of potential help for themselves and their children. The similarity in functions of the two types [582] of relationships is paralleled by their similarity in structural effects. Just as affinal connections preclude the possibility of marriage between any of the relatives of the two elementary families involved, so do *kumbari* connections. Moreover, since [612] the people of the village apparently prefer to select *kumbari* from non-kin (they must do so with affinals), they succeed in augmenting their network of associations with what, from the standpoint of kin connections, is a random collection of elementary families and their bilateral kindred. Non-kin are more likely to be [369] in other villages, and people of greater prestige in the towns and cities. Here again *kumbari* associations tend to lead out of the village, and there is frequently a disparity in the economic and social positions between villagers and their *kumbari*. On the one hand, some prosperous village farmers serve as godparents for shepherd families, and on the other, the aspiring farming families choose an urban merchant, or a professional man, as *kumbaros*. The parallel with relatives by marriage is most striking between *kumbari* through godparenthood, and the mutual obligations involved are larger in number, last longer, and are more likely to be fulfilled than those with marriage sponsors.

602 608 612 Still another parallel between in-laws and *kumbari* is that the individuals who fill these statuses are freely chosen, in contrast with consanguineal (blood)

/15 cont./

people. This policy of the government has created more problems for the future generations to solve than confront the people at the present. The whole family concentrates its attention on wheat raising since its market and price are definitely fixed. The harvest rush seasons has made obligatory the work of women and children. Even younger children share the burden by either bringing drinking water, caring for the infants of the family or by collecting the fallen wheat heads. It is hard to give the age at which children are expected to do their share. It all depends on how important the need of the children are.

243 [654] [435] 857 243 464

Work of Wives.

Throughout the ages we find that women, besides doing the household work and raising children, share in the farm work. The women of Megali Vrisi more than any other women in the civilized world have become the real beasts of burden of village life. They have to get up early in the morning, prepare breakfast and prepare food for the whole day. As a matter of fact it is an accepted principle that women are selected as to their ability for working hard, bearing children, working at the loom and having the lips closed. These are the outstanding /16/ qualities that every woman is expected to have. Women in discussing or in gossiping about girls express their opinion as the outstanding quality of a girl, how tight her lips are, and the amount of time she spends at the loom. It is up to the parents to look up a girl for their son either within the village or from the neighboring villages. The son has to consent to what parents decide in this matter. In many instances it happens that the young man meets his wife for the first time on his wedding day. There are many reasons that usually lead the parents to decide for the marriage of their son.

562 [462] [581] [521] [584] 562 581 596

a. Need for extra labor in the fields and at home.
b. Desire of the father and mother to have grandchildren so they can train them before they are too old.
c. The desire of the parents to have someone in the house to take care of them.

/21 cont./ The one crop farming in most cases develops many economic and social difficulties. The peddlers of finished goods in the villages absorb a large part of the trade. Usually in exchange for their goods they get live poultry and eggs.

The biological function. The morals are very strict in the village. In the grammar school the children are /22/ together but after the age of 15 one seldom finds boys and girls playing together. Only the close relatives have an approved right to dance with a girl or walk with her to the market. The boys get married at from 18-25 and the girls from 15 to 20 years of age. The period from 15 to 20 is spent by the girl in preparing her dowry. She is busy at the loom or in embroidery with the needle and thread. One of the desired qualities of the girl is to have her handmade stuff. The ultimate aim of the marriage is to have children. If it happens that she cannot have a child the first year of her married life then gossip will start in the village of her inability to bear a child. Just the way a farmer thinks about a cow not calving, so do the relatives and especially the father and mother-in-law. There is no limit as to the number of the children, as long as both husband and wife are healthy. The usual belief and excuse is, "God gave them and He will take care of them." Both young men and the young women are instructed as to their duties as fathers and mothers. Birth control has no place here. Nature takes care of it. The strongest of the children survive under the conditions that are available for living. Besides, to use any method of preventing birth to a child is thought to be an immoral act. Thus out of seven to eight children in a family about five survive up to the age of six and the rest /23/ die before then.

Size of families. The size of families varies in Megali Vrisi. One finds the largest numbers among Caucasians and the smallest among Thracians. The Caucasians used to live in compound families and still they stick to this idea even though it was broken down due to the new method of distribution of land. Even today one finds as large as 25 members in the family and as low as 3 members in the family. The compound family makes farming

584 882 increasing freedom in the lives of young people, particularly in Athens. Yet here too the web of relationships and extended responsibility is so widespread that the family, in effect, has its eyes on the young people wherever they go.

MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE

842 The Greeks love children. Boys are generally preferred; traditionally, sons are a sign of family vigour. Besides, a family not only loses its daughters, it has to pay out property with them. Childlessness is a terrible calamity, and the woman is held responsible. People say "the poor man", pitying the husband for his wife's sterility. A recent magazine report on current scientific discoveries combats this belief, telling its readers that potent men have been found to be sterile and that therefore wives are not always at fault for the childlessness of the family. Women fear to have anything done to their reproductive organs and will accept "maternity difficulties" without asking for medical help, lest this might somehow harm their fertility. A book ● 581 on maternal and child care, *For the Mother*, urges that before marriage, both family histories be examined for possible sterility.

For the Mother urges young people to choose mates with a view to progeny. As a sanction, it mentions that the ancient Greeks urged eugenic marriages; and that the term "eugenics" was invented by Xenophon. Young people are advised to see a doctor before making the final decision. They are further advised to choose according to firmness of flesh and orderliness of features and limbs, for seriousness tempered with cheerfulness, for optimism implemented by effective energy. Marriage with kin, and with people having family histories of tuberculosis, syphilis, alcoholism, psychasthenia, is to be avoided.

843 According to this manual, a young woman beginning a pregnancy is expected to notice first an indisposition, accompanied by the non-appearance of the menses: this the husband diagnoses for her with great joy. Next come the food whims and the nausea, and this is the time to go for obstetrical advice. The first two months are the critical ones for the life of the embryo; therefore, a mother is urged to take a vacation in the second month. After that she may resume her normal activities, taking care only to avoid over-exertion and jerky movements [515] In the last month she should not immerse herself in bathing, because of the danger of infection; for the same reason, she should avoid sexual intercourse in the last three weeks. In the last two weeks she • [513] should avoid all exertion. She should sleep eight to ten hours daily during her pregnancy, never more, lest she become listless and melancholy. She should avoid large social gatherings, she should not play cards, she should drink nothing stronger than light wine, she should eat meals as balanced as is consistent with her means and her

losis in the provinces as compared to the cities, and Greeks interviewed gave as their opinion that this was true of the health picture generally.

Doctors are very highly respected. There have been women doctors in Greece, as well as women dentists, for many years; but the village image of the doctor is one of a man. However, a woman is much freer to discuss gynecological difficulties with a woman physician. There is great reluctance to mention the genital areas, and many women do not even know the appropriate terms to use. The acceptance of the *metrica*, the maternity difficulties, may be partly due to the reluctance to have this general area exposed and examined.

The handicapped are not easily accepted in Greece. To be crippled, blind, lame, means that one is not quite a person. Children might even jeer at the handicapped without being reprimanded. Amputation is therefore a terrible calamity, because it makes a person incomplete. Such a person cannot be accorded the respect that goes with the ability to assume responsibility. Parents may discourage their daughter from marrying a one-armed man whom they otherwise like in every respect, and who is perfectly capable of making a good living. Such people are assumed to be dependent. Greeks were bewildered by an UNRRA one-armed worker. Not only was he in the wrong function, but he could not fall into any known pattern of relationship, since he insisted on being physically self-sufficient. Since he would not accept help, the Greeks were uncomfortable with him, not knowing how to treat him.

Malaria, the great scourge which increased tuberculosis through lowering resistance, and which decreased production by sapping the energy, is now almost completely defeated by the spectacular DDT campaign. In the beginning of the campaign, the specialists, unaware of the peasants' love of sleeping in their orchards on hot summer nights, sprayed only the interiors of houses; when breeding grounds were also attacked, however, the campaign was totally effective, and has been of inestimable value for the introduction of further changes, since it won the confidence of the people.

Traditionally, there is no connexion between hygienic measures and health. Cleanliness is part of being well-ordered and well-groomed, not a matter of removing germs. And cleanliness is patterned. There is a day for scrubbing the kitchen floor, for changing sheets, for changing underwear, for going to the bath; there is a time for washing the face and the hands. There were never many latrines in rural areas and the situation has been aggravated through the war; in 1948, it was reported that 98 per cent of the farmers had no latrines.

NUTRITION

The Greek meal is a family ritual. It is a social occasion, a communion of the family, which does not have to be enhanced by special